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Bethel Historical Society

SOCIETY ENDOWMENT CAMPAIGN TOPS GOAL BY OVER \$1000

Much credit is due to Howard W. Cole, Campaign Chairman and his committee Barbara D. Brown, John B. Head, E. Louise Lincoln and Helen A. Morton for successfully guiding the 1983 Endowment Campaign to a record total. Deepest gratitude is expressed to all of the following for making it possible:

Barbara Rich Adams, Lancaster, NH; Roger & Nancy Adams, West Simsbury, CT; James & Consuelo Alger, Bethel; Kimball & Ruth Ames, Bethel; Avery & Mary Angevine, Bethel; Ernest & Alberta Angevine, Bethel; Anonymous; Arthur & Ruth Barker, Stafford Springs, CT; Jean Barker, Delray Beach, Fla; The Barn Motel, Bethel; Clarence Bartlett, Nashua, NH; Clark & Neda Bartlett, Bethel; Arthur & Ruth Bean, Springfield, VT; Lester & Bessie Bennett, Rumford; Bethel Auto Sales, Bethel; Bethel Furniture Stock Inc., Bethel; Bethel Savings Bank, Bethel; Bethel Spa Motel & Shops, Bethel; Lewis & Priscilla Bissell, Jackson, NH; Charles & Patricia Blake, Bethel; Lillian Bomhoff, Mendham, NJ; Andrew & Colleen Boyd, West Bethel; Donald & Arlene Brown, Bethel; Doris Brown, Bethel; Geneva Brown, Norway; Jeffrey & Peggy Brown, East Longmeadow, MA; Julia Brown, Bethel, in memory of Beatrice B. Conrad; Marie Brown, Bethel; Merton & Martha Brown, Bethel; Vernon & Maxine Brown, Bethel; Guy & Nancy Butler, Bethel; Donald & Mary Calderwood, Mesa, AZ; Lee F. Carroll, Gorham, NH; Elizabeth Mason Carter, West Bethel; Casco Northern Bank, Bethel; Steve & Lynda Chandler, Bethel; Franklin & Rosalind Chapman, Bethel; Philip S. Chapman Jr., Peabody, MA; Hugh & Marie Clark, Pine Hill, NJ; Ellen Coffin, Norway; Howard W. & Virginia Cole, Bethel; Mary Lou Cole, Norwood, MA; Bill & Eleanor Conary, Bethel; Helen A. Connolly, Port Ludlow, WA; Cecil Conrad, Bethel, in memory of Beatrice B. Conrad; Carole A. Corliss, Bethel; Joanna Crounse, Danvers, MA; Marjorie Cummings, Bethel; A.D. Davis & Son, Inc., Bethel; Dana Jr. & Barbara Douglas, Bethel; Hugh & Mariann Durgin, Bethel; Dale M. Dyke, Rumford; Rodney & Kathryn Eames, Cape Elizabeth; Donald & Edith Eddy, Bethel; Lucretia Evans, Brooklyn, NY; Edith Hayes Eypper, Bethel; Fabric Emporium, Bethel; Howard & Alice Fales, West Redding, CT; Raymond L. Fales, Braintree, MA; Walter & Phyllis Fales, Royal Oak, MI; Edna Fallon, Bethel; Donald & Olive Ferguson, Exeter, NH; Norman & Barbara Ferguson, Hanover; Dorothy Fortier, Falmouth; Guy & Madeleine Gibbs, Bethel; Gordon & Mary Gillies, Bethel; Robert W. Goodwin, Norway; Celia K. Gorman, Bethel; Cynthia T. Gotjen, Bethel; Francis H. & Lillian H. Grant, Gorham, ME; Alice T. Gray, Portland; Paul & Patricia Gray, South Windsor, CT; Agnes Haines, Bethel; Floribel Haines, Bethel; Ralph & Marion Hall, Bethel; Mildred C. Hanscom, South Portland; Frances S. Harding, Bryant Pond; Dr. John & Cathy Hart, Bangor; Colwyn & Judy Haskell, Bethel; Euphemia Hastings, Bethel; Edward H. Hastings, Milton, MA; Lloyd A. & Florence Hathaway, North Abington, MA; John & Fumiko Head, Bethel; Olive Head, West Bethel; Clayton

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Major Gideon A. Hastings (1821-1905) 12th Maine Battalion

LIFE ON THE HOME FRONT: BETHEL DURING THE CIVIL WAR by Stanley Russell Howe

Editor's Note: Few events in American history have received more attention than the Civil War. A neglected aspect of the study of that conflict is its effect upon small towns far from the fighting front. This paper was originally presented at the monthly meeting of the Bethel Historical Society on November 6, 1983 and has been somewhat revised and enlarged for publication in this issue.

Bethel, Maine in 1860 was a town of 2523 residents according to the federal census of that year, the second largest (next to Paris) town in Oxford County. It could boast 474 households with an average size of five persons and four vacant dwellings. Through the census (always bearing in mind certain errors) it can be determined that the average age of those living in the town in 1860 was twenty-six with a wide variety of occupations represented. Not surprisingly over eighty percent of the populace derived their livelihood from agriculture. As the decade of the 1860s progressed, however, commercial activity and manufacturing increased, particularly at Bethel Hill, "Skillington" (west of Bethel Hill), West Bethel and South Bethel (Walker's Mills).

Eighty-seven percent of Bethel's citizens in 1860 were natives of Maine. Most of the others had been born in neighboring states but several were natives of Ireland, perhaps having remained here following the construction of the Atlantic and St. Lawrence Railroad (later the Grand Trunk) during the 1840s and 1850s.

According to the 1860 census the wealthiest head of a household (twenty-seven households were counted with holdings worth \$5000 or more in real and personal estates) was Robert

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& Helen Heath, Norway; Richard & Jane Hosterman; West Bethel; Howe Family, Bethel, in memory of Sylvia Conroy, Beatrice B. Conrad, Gertrude V. Hastings and Albert H. Brown; William & Joan Howe, Ashton, Ontario; W. Sydney Howe, Belfast; Dr. James T. & Patricia Hudson, Bethel; Margaret H. Humphrey, Portland; Harlan & Gertrude Hutchins, Bethel; Lee & Virginia Hutchins, Bethel; Iva Hutchinson, Bethel; Ernestine P. Jackson, Nashua, NH; Arlan & Eleanor Jodrey, Bethel; Charlotte K. Johnson, Westford, MA; Helen & Paul Judkins, Dixfield; William H. and Theresa C. Judson, Bethel; Paul & Jean Kailey, Bethel; Royden & Alice Keddy, Gorham, ME; Kelly's Auto Parts, Bethel; Kendall Insurance Inc., Bethel; Earlon & Mary Keniston, Bethel; Alden & Mabel Kennett, Bethel; John R. King, Lakeland, FL; Frederick Sr. & Barbara Kneeland, Cherryfield; Leonora H. Knowles, Portland; Dr. Werner A. Kohlmeier, Baltimore, MD; Karl & Helen Kraul, Portland; Eugene & Katherine Lafond, San Diego, CA; Harold & Edith Lawrence, Portland; Daisy M. Leclair, Bethel; E. Louise Lincoln, Bethel; Doris O. Lord, Haines City, FL; Stanley & Elizabeth Lord, Bethel; Ethel MacKenzie, Bryant Pond; Charles & Alfaretta Mason, Pittsburg, PA; Frederick & Mina McMillin, Bethel; Pearline McMillin, Bethel; Marilyn Noyes Mollicone, Augusta; Joann C. Mooney, Ottawa, Ontario; Helen A. Morton, Newry; Charles & Cathy Newell, Bethel; Hazel Newell, Locke Mills; Herbert & Evelyn Nickerson, Bethel; Marge Noll, Bethel; E. M. Nowlan, Port Washington, NY; Leslie A. Noyes, Bethel; Margaret H. Oakes, Augusta; William & Florence O'Connor, West Paris, Frank & Elaine Packard, Bethel; Frances W. Peabody, Portland; Helen M. Philbrook, Augusta, Persis Post, Newry; Betty G. Prescott, Bangor; Prim's Rexall Pharmacy, Bethel; Anthony & Eleanor Pugliese, Bethel; Charles & Betsey Raymond, Bethel; Redwood Motel, Bethel; Marian K. Rich, Roanoke, VA; Vance & Janet Richardson, Portland; Col. Arthur & Elinor Ritchings, Petersburg, VA; Beatrice Ritter, Torrington, CT; Robert B. & Ellen R. Russell, Westwood, MA; Bill & Margaret Sawyer, Waterford; Walter E. Scott, Dorchester, MA; Dr. Charles N. & Edith Seashore, Bethel & Washington, D.C.; Roxanna Twitchell Sly, Brooklin; Dr. David & Sylvia Smith, Bangor; John & Paula Stanley, St. Paul, MN; Charles & Christine Stedman, Ottawa, Ontario; Thomas & Dorothy Stevens, East Greenwich, RI; Alice R. Stewart, Orono; Dexter & Janet Stowell, Bethel; George Jr. & Harriett Stowell, West Bethel; George III & Mary Stowell, Falmouth; Glenn E. & Marion B. Swan, Mexico; Douglas M. Swett, Fryeburg; Robert & Emma Tewksbury, Kerrville, TX; Margaret Joy Tibbetts, Bethel; Rebecca S. Thomas, Luray, VA; Dave & Irma Thompson, Bethel; Bertha Thurston, Bethel; Richard & Ruth Verville, Bethel; T. P. Wall, Nashville, TN; Margaret S. Ward, King of Prussia, PA; Ruth H. Watson, East Sullivan; Erland & Margaret Wentzell, West Baldwin; Elizabeth D. Whiteman, Elkins Park, PA; Claus & Jacqueline Wiese, Bethel; Daniel & Rosalie Wight, Rumford; Ruth W. Wight, Bethel; W. J. Wheeler & Co. Inc. Norway; Richard & Virginia Williamson, Upton; Eleanor Wilson, Bryant Pond; Elizabeth C. Woronzoff, Bethel; James & Joy Yarnell, Upton; Bryce & Barbara Yates, Bethel; Russell F. Yates, West Paris; Dr. Robert & Jeanette G. York, Orrs Island; Archie & Jane Young Jr. Bethel.

Civil War, (Continued from page 1)

A. Chapman, a merchant who in 1859 built the handsome brick block on Broad Street (now owned by life members Gordon and Mary Gillies). His holdings were estimated to be worth a total of \$27,000. Close behind were Ira Crocker Kimball also a merchant with holdings of \$25,000 and Moses Pattee, a millowner and proprietor of a hall on Spring Street that was the center of Bethel's social and political life during this era. He had holdings worth \$18,000. Most of the others were farmers except for a physician Joshua Fanning whose property was valued at \$8000.

In 1860, Bethel had one dentist, five doctors, twenty-eight teachers, eight clergymen, three lawyers and a wide variety of skilled and semi-skilled workers. Thirteen people were listed in 1860 as employed by the Grand Trunk Railroad. Two sailors were enumerated as was one horse jockey. It was indeed an impressive number of skills and professions but nothing of the diversity that would be found in the final decades of the nineteenth century.

As in almost everything in this era, Bethel was perhaps quite typical of most Maine towns for its size and inland location. Throughout this study little appears to emerge that varied markedly from patterns prevalent in other communities. The town did not have any abolitionist groups established within its borders as did the Oxford County towns of Sumner, Paris, Peru and Norway, although there was a Male Antislavery Society founded in 1841 in Oxford County according to Edward O. Shriver, *Go Free: The Antislavery Impulse in Maine 1833-1855* (1970). Presumably some Bethel men may have belonged to this group but none has come to light as yet.

To understand popular sentiment in Bethel regarding the slavery question is a difficult proposition. A review of the newspapers of the era and the holdings in the archives of the Bethel Historical Society reveals few specific indications of antislavery sentiment. Presumably there were abolitionists in Bethel and a few may have sided with the South when war broke out. It seems safe to say that most citizens remained in the middle, not certain blacks should vote or have any rights but assured they should not be slaves either. (For details of northern views see Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961).

One small insight which may or may not have meaning is the fact that a defense of slavery (George S. Sawyer's *Southern Institutes: Or an Inquiry Into the Origin and Early Prevalence of Slavery and the Slave Trade*, Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1858) was owned by prominent attorney Enoch Foster Jr. who was later a justice of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court. Merely owning a book is no indication that Foster shared the South's sentiment but does suggest that he was at least familiar with some of its arguments.

The 1860 election, however, does provide some solid indications of political sentiment in Bethel despite the fact that a son of Oxford County was on the Republican ticket with Abraham Lincoln. The Lincoln-Hamlin GOP stood for no further extension of slavery and won Bethel's endorsement with 206 votes cast in its favor. The Stephen A. Douglas-Herschel V. Johnson Democratic ticket which supported non-intervention with slave holding garnered 101 votes. The Breckinridge Democrats, endorsed locally by former U.S. Congressman David Hammons (1814-1901), supported slavery in the territories and attracted forty votes in Bethel. The ticket of John Bell and Edward Everett condemning sectional parties and upholding "the constitution of the country, the Union of the States and the influence of the law" received no support in this town.

Just prior to the outbreak of hostilities the Republican party in Bethel had grown to be the dominant one. The *Oxford Democrat* of March 1, 1861 noted that all the town officials were Republicans except Oliver H. Mason, Second Selectman (a nephew of Dr. Moses Mason, a Jacksonian Democrat who had served in Congress in the 1830s) and Samuel F. Gibson, the town agent who it appears became a "Copperhead" Democrat as the war progressed. Throughout the war, Bethel favored Republican candidates by comfortable margins. By 1864, Lincoln running with Andrew Johnson of Tennessee on a National Union ticket garnered 268 votes in Bethel compared with 208 for the Democratic slate of George B. McClellan and George H.

Pendleton, a much closer vote than was usually the case. There were several reasons for this but there may have been resentment against Lincoln for dropping Hamlin from the ticket.

Shortly after the firing on Fort Sumter in April, 1861 the call went out for 75,000 volunteers to protect the national capital. Maine was asked to furnish one regiment and Oxford County one company. There was only one military unit in Oxford County at the time and that was the Norway Light Infantry. This at once volunteered and requested additional men to fill up its ranks. Bethel sent eight men to join the troops of the Norway infantry to fight what the *Oxford Democrat* termed "the putrid venom of secession."

The Bethel men who went to Norway were described by editor and Gould Academy principal Dr. Nathaniel T. True (1819-1887) in the *Bethel Courier* for April 26, 1861 as "fine, athletic, noble-looking fellows." They were Solon Robertson (4th Me.), Alfred True (son of Dr. True) (1st Me.), A.E. Seavey, Charles P. Stearns (1st Me.), Edward P. Stearns (1st Me.), H. Dolloff, Adelbert Grover (12th Me., killed at Ship Island, April 4, 1862), and Timothy M. Bean (12th Me.). Before leaving Bethel they were reported to have made the rounds of various businesses to say "adieu" to all. At the depot where they were to depart a Gould Academy student E.M. Wight mounted a carload of wood and made a patriotic speech that Dr. True described as "appropriate and acceptable" for the occasion.

A second call from Washington soon followed for 300,000 men for three years. The *Bethel Courier* described the military fervor of the town as "aroused." On May 31, 1861 the *Courier* reported that forty-one men had enlisted and a company of men would soon be organized.

The company (the first organized in Oxford County after the call) was soon formed by Clark S. Edwards (1824-1907) and called the Bethel Rifle Guards. (Later Edwards would lead Company I, 5th Me. serving in the major engagements of the Army of the Potomac including Gettysburg. His war record would be a major factor in his selection as the Democratic candidate for Governor of Maine in 1886). Its officers besides Edwards were John B. Walker and Cyrus M. Wormell. Major William F. Frye (later United States Senator from Maine) was at the organizational meeting and made what Dr. William B. Lapham (1828-1894) called in his History of Bethel "a very eloquent and patriotic speech."

By the end of May the eight Bethel soldiers were in Portland and "in good spirits" according to the report in the *Courier*. They were "eager to get into active service" and had all taken the pledge to abstain from intoxicating liquor, one of the many temperance efforts made by Neil Dow's forces. A former resident of Newry living in Portland at the time presented these Bethel soldiers with various necessities and a farmer in Westbrook provided them with milk and apples.

In Bethel the erection of what the *Courier* termed "a fine flagstaff" was placed on the common symbolizing the town's commitment to the war effort. A company of home guards was organized in May, 1861 by Gideon A. Hastings (1821-1905). Hastings, grandson of a founder of Bethel and later the leading spirit in the extensive Hastings Lumber Company operations on Wild River near Gilead, in the fall of 1861 became Captain of Company A, Twelfth Maine Volunteers. During the war he was promoted to Major and was present at the capture of New Orleans, serving in all the campaigns in the Gulf Department. He also served in the Shenandoah Valley under General Sheridan and after the war became Provst Marshall of West Georgia and detailed to the Freedman's Bureau. Always a Demo-

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

I am very pleased to announce that the Society's 1983 Endowment Campaign netted over \$6,500 for the Regular Endowment. This was more than \$1,000 over the goal established by the Endowment Campaign Committee for the year. It means that at the end of 1983 there was more than \$13,000 in this fund which as it continues to grow will be increasingly essential to the Society's future. If we can raise this amount (or more) each year, it will eventually be possible to add to the Society's staff and plan for additional museum space in a timely and adequate manner.

I wish to thank Howard Cole and the other members of the Endowment Campaign Committee for their efforts and congratulate them on their success. I also wish to express the deepest gratitude on the Society's behalf to all those who contributed so generously and made this success possible.

Donald G. Bennett

1984 BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY PROGRAMS

January 5: Annual "So You Think You Know Bethel" contest; February 2: Annual Historical Film Festival; March 1: "High Street Through the Years", Geraldine S Howe; April 5: Collector's Night; May 3: "Oxford County Vignettes", Billie Hornbeek, Staff Archaeologist, White Mountain National Forest; June 7: "Ketchum, Bethel and Vicinity: The Photographs of Martha Fifield Wilkins", Randall H. Bennett; July 5: Annual Picnic, Joint Meeting with the Fryeburg Historical Society, "Fryeburg-Bethel Historical Connections", Stanley R. Howe; August 2: "Maine's Powder Mills", Dr. Maurice Whitten, Professor Emeritus of Chemistry, University of Southern Maine; September 6: Pot Luck Supper, Annual Meeting; October 4: Annual "What's It"; November 1: "Bethel's Memorable Women", Margaret Joy Tibbetts; December 6: Annual Christmas Program. All meetings will be held at the Society's headquarters, the Dr. Moses Mason House and will begin promptly at 7:30 p.m. The annual picnic and the pot luck supper will begin at 6:30 p.m.

IN MEMORIAM

Died, November 26, 1983, Hazel G. Wheeler, West Bethel. A member of the Society since 1975 Mrs. Wheeler was active on the Garden and Grounds Committee and served for several summers as a guide in the Dr. Moses Mason Museum.

Died, December 3, 1983, Albert H. Brown, Rumford Center. A member of the Society since 1975 and a native of Bethel, Mr. Brown was a generous donor to Society and well-known for his role in the popular Society program "So You Think You Know Bethel."

Died, December 22, 1983, Mabel B. Robertson, Bethel, contributing member of the Society.

SOCIETY OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES

Donald G. Bennett, President; Alden Kennett, Vice President; Mary C. Keniston, Secretary; Margaret Joy Tibbetts, Treasurer; Trustees: Catherine Newell, Ronald Snyder, Willard Wight, Persis Post, Ruth Wight.

crat in politics, upon his return to Bethel he became town clerk, selectman, county commissioner and representative to the legislature.

Despite this distinguished record and impressive role during the war, a letter to Governor Israel Washburn in October, 1861 was not so reassuring. C. J. Talbot of Portland, who apparently was no admirer of Hastings and his brother-in-law William K. Kimball of Paris (who also compiled an outstanding war record) wrote that they did "not care about the principle" of the war and would certainly "sell out to Jeff Davis if found that to be the best." Talbot accused Hastings and Kimball of being "Peace Men" and "Dana Men" with "no heart for the war." (John W. Dana was the "Copperhead" candidate for Governor of Maine in 1861 and received a substantial share of the Democratic support of Bethel, 129 votes.) The Governor's correspondent went on to urge him to deny them commissions on the grounds arguing "the public will sustain you in standing up firmly and refusing to commission them." Governor Washburn was apparently not moved by these pleas since both men received their commissions and served the Union cause with distinction.

In July, 1861 the battle of Bull Run resulted in a complete route of Union forces. The *Oxford Democrat* for August 2, 1861 urged that no one lose hope in this loss but that the Fifth Maine was "all cut up." No Bethel soldier as far as was known had been lost although one, Sergeant Scribner, had been wounded. In addition the Captain's water boy, thirteen year old Charles Freeman, was missing.

The next week the *Democrat* brought further news of the war for Bethel. Young Charlie Freeman was taken prisoner and was incarcerated in Richmond (he was released as a result of a prisoner exchange and returned to Bethel.) Washington Robertson of Bethel was now reported missing. (Later it was determined that he had deserted.) Bethel men seem to have been, the newspaper reported, "utterly exhausted from want of sleep, food and a long march on the double quick before they arrived at the scene of the action." Taking up a contention to be repeated in this newspaper and many others during the war, the *Democrat* added: "There has been some outrageously bad management in that battle." This underscores the point the famed Civil War historian, Bruce Catton made concerning the weapons used. He contended these changed but the tactics employed remained the same as in the American Revolution. Catton cited the fact that the rifle had become decidedly more deadly but the strategy employed assumed these weapons to be far less accurate. As a result many men were killed or wounded who might have otherwise survived without injury. Another factor to be considered in the management of war was that the troops on both sides were rather casually organized. In many cases discipline depended heavily upon the popularity and calibre of the commanding officers. This situation caused the great Prussian general Von Moltke to consider the American Civil War of little interest to military tacticians since it was in the opinion merely "the movement of armed mobs."

These "armed mobs" in Bruce Catton's view caused the Civil War to be more like World War I since each side considered that anything which would assist the other in prolonging the war was a target and should be dealt with accordingly. This "total war" outlook meant in the North's case for instance that if a bridge, railroad, farm or factory allowed the South to continue the war it was a target for destruction. Regular reports of such destruction filled the pages of the *Democrat* and while we have no firm first-hand views of Bethel citizens who read these pages, their reactions must have been obvious.

Equally compelling were the reports of wounds and deaths. These were described in detail as they happened and could not have helped but have had the effect of bringing the war graphically to the home front, especially when one considers the numbers who attended funerals in Bethel for dead soldiers. Twenty-eight Bethel men were killed or died as a result of wounds received during the war and their funerals were frequently characterized with sermons strongly supporting the Union cause.

Even more poignant were the reports of returned soldiers who survived the war in southern prisons. One such example was Peter T. Bean of the Sixteenth Maine who was captured and spent nearly a year in the notorious Libby Prison. He described an ordeal where he was "glad to get a lean dog to eat." His clothes were all worn off below the waist and his survival was in part due to his ability to stand for long hours as he "did not want to lie down among the filth and vermin."

As grim as this news was to read, there is evidence that Bethel was indeed becoming increasingly prosperous as the war progressed. By the middle of 1863 the *Democrat* was reporting that the steam mill recently established to the west of Bethel Hill seemed "destined to do a good business." Summer visitors appeared to be increasing each year since additional facilities were being built to house them. Prosperity even extended to farmers since Dr. True, also a keen observer of agricultural developments (He was also founder of the first Farmer's Club in Maine, a state-wide predecessor to the Grange and later editor of the *Maine Farmer*) noted the high prices farmers were getting for crops, particularly for hops. As the war continued consumer prices rose and the Bethel column occasionally complained of the high prices paid for goods and services.

The second year of the war brought more and more reports of wartime activities in the *Democrat*. In early 1862 a soldier from an Illinois regiment wrote to a Bethel acquaintance that he had received three balls through his cap, one more struck his ear "just enough to draw blood" and another just grazed his head. The *Democrat* called the latter "pretty close grazing." On the fourth of July the *Democrat* reported on Bethel military processions followed by a gathering in Dr. Moses Mason's grove where the Declaration of Independence was read by A. S. Twitchell. Next came an adjournment to the Congregational Church where a "fervant" Union speech was heard. In the evening fireworks were set off at West Bethel.

As the summer continued, recruiting offices were set up in Bethel with A. P. Knight as recruiting officer. Toward the end of July, 1862 more than one hundred men had enlisted. Fervor for the Union cause apparently reached a new level of intensity that month when General Oliver Otis Howard addressed a group of local soldiers from the porch of the newly built Bethel House. Attending were men from the West Bethel Company (Eldridge Wheeler, Captain) and East Bethel Company (John Decatur Hastings, Captain). Later many citizens gathered at Pattee's Hall for a meeting chaired by Dr. True where Rev. David Garland offered a prayer for the safety of Bethel soldiers. General Howard also addressed this gathering. He made a stirring Union speech and praised the efforts of Bethel soldiers on the Potomac campaign. Colonel Edwards was selected for special commendation and cheers were given for the Union, for the Bethel soldiers, for President Lincoln and General McLellen. Seven citizens were selected from this meeting to assist the Sanitary Commission in meeting the needs of the war with D. F. Brown chosen as chairman.

The United States Sanitary Commission, a private agency, organized at the beginning of the war, was responsible for assisting the War Department with the comfort of its soldiers and for

the care of the sick and wounded. Many communities on the local level had established an organization to help with the national effort. In Bethel, the Ladies Union Aid Society founded in late 1861 fulfilled this role.

Even before the Aid Society was formed, Bethel citizens had sent \$185 in contributions, twenty-nine barrels of vegetables and two of dried apples to the U.S. Sanitary Commission. The Union Aid Society was undertaken with contributions totaling \$413. It met weekly usually at Pattee's Hall but occasionally at a member's home and was composed of some fifty ladies (several of whose husbands were in the war). Attempting to assist in meeting the needs of the men in the war zone, the Society sent food and supplies to Portland by train for delivery to the Commission in Washington. A typical shipment might include the following which is recorded in the Secretary's minutes for October 28, 1862: one bed sack, four hop pillows, twelve pillow slips, one vest, eight cravats, two pair socks, five cotton shirts, ninety-nine handkerchiefs, ten pair of slippers, fifteen towels, one roll of linen, two and a half pounds of lint, two hundred yards of bandages, one bag of bags, one bag of dried apples, one bag of dried blueberries, four packages of compresses, and one bag of beef tallow. Most work was done by hand but on June 6, 1862 the minutes record that "two ladies came in with sewing machines, aiding greatly in forwarding the work of making shirts and drawers." The Ladies Union Aid Society is perhaps one of the best indicators of sentiment relating to the support for the Bethel war effort. These industrious ladies certainly produced large volumes of supplies and not an insignificant amount of money to support the Union cause.

Another good indication of sentiment during the war years was voting at town meetings. The regular annual meeting was held as is traditional today in March but other special town meetings were called to deal with wartime issues. In July, 1862 a special meeting was held to authorize the Selectmen to borrow \$1500 to pay the bounty for soldiers and care for their families. Apparently this appeared too generous to some citizens for in September, 1862 it was voted on a motion of Mighill Mason to "pay a bounty to volunteers of twenty dollars and five dollars a month for the first six months." The \$1500 raised earlier was then reduced to \$900.

The following year the town voted to raise \$2000 for families of volunteers. A special town meeting in July, 1863 resulted in the passing over of an article to pay bounties to drafted men and conscripts. Discussion according to local historian William B. Lapham on this question was "very animated." In August of the same year those who had opposed passing over the article lost again by a vote of 74-16 but in a second meeting later in the day won approval in providing bounties of \$50 each and the Selectmen were instructed to borrow money for this purpose if necessary.

By 1864 the draft had been instituted and it was voted to establish a recruiting committee of Israel G. Kimball, Gilman L. Blake and Timothy Bean with \$1000 to be paid for bounties. Apparently not enough recruits were forthcoming so that a special meeting in December named I. G. Kimball as agent "to procure either enlisted men or substitutes to fill the town's quotas." The town treasurer was authorized to borrow \$3000 for this purpose. By 1865, the last year of the conflict and with the end in sight, the town, without extensive debate, raised \$500 to aid the families of volunteers. It appears throughout these years as far as town meetings were concerned there was no broad consensus as to how best to support Bethel soldiers and their families.

Criticism of the war's conduct was found in the pages of the *Democrat*. A Mrs. Goddard who was present at Harper's Ferry

when Union forces surrendered to an inferior force spoke in Bethel about her belief that the war was being mismanaged. No further details are apparently available as to the impact of her speech upon the town but several Bethel soldiers in the Seventh Maine shortly afterward reported that they had full confidence in General McLellen.

Morale is always important in wartime and the *Democrat* frequently urged those back home to remember the men in the war zones. Write to the soldiers urged the newspaper for "many a rough cheek has been wet with tears when a letter has been received from those at home and who by their letters gave a pledge they were not forgotten." A Bethel soldier, Simeon Sanborn of the Fifth Maine wrote his mother from Camp Franklin, Virginia, December 16, 1861 that he had "some footings, mitten gloves and quite a number of other things sent me so I am not in any particular want at present." He also reported that he received "about all the Maine papers" and that it was a "good thing to have friends especially when you are in the army."

By late 1862 the *Democrat* itself provided visible evidence of the effect of the war by reducing its size due to inflation and the scarcity of materials. As another indication of the effect of war, there appeared in this first reduced size issue an advertisement from Bethel attorney David Hammons that he would assist soldiers having claims against the government.

The war was brought home in a dramatic manner in February, 1863 with an epidemic of small pox at North Bethel. The *Democrat* reported that the disease had been carried home by a returning soldier.

Despite this unpleasant news, Dr. True in writing his column for the *Democrat* was not always serious. In June, 1863 responding to the abundance of mosquitos in Bethel he wrote that "the Southern rebellion has been entirely forgotten in the fight to keep them away from body."

By July, 1863 the draft had been imposed and a list was published in the *Democrat* of sixty-four Bethel men who were to appear for induction. The newspaper reported that the young men who have been drafted "take the matter very heroically and cheerfully." In this call-up only one "professional" man had been drafted, Samuel F. Gibson, the "copperhead" *Democrat*, lawyer and town agent who served as a captain from May 23, 1864 to May 7, 1865.

Few letters from Bethel soldiers have come to light to date but one of particular interest is that of William L. Grover who was a Sergeant in Company B, Twenty-third Maine Volunteers who served in the Union army from September 29, 1862 to July 15, 1863. Grover was apparently quite religious as his letters are filled with references to God and church services. He appeared quite content with his lot as a soldier writing his sister from Muddy Branch, Maryland in March, 1863 that he was "well, fat and homly (sic) though the boys tell me that I am growing handsome." Even though his letters were largely positive he could not resist occasional references to home: "I hope Mr. Fernald (Gould Academy principal who later became the second president of the University of Maine at Orono) will prove a good teacher & build up the old academy school once more."

Another Bethel soldier mentioned earlier, Simeon Sanborn was similarly upbeat in his report from Camp Vernon, Virginia in September, 1861. Writing to let the folks back home know that "Old Jeff has not gotten me yet" he described his situation: "We have plenty of peaches, watermelon and muskmelon and any quantity of grapes. I have eaten about a half bushel today. Have got a nice place for camping. It is on a high hill (where we) can see all the ships and steamers pass up and down the river. We have plenty to eat and drink whiskey twice a day if we want.

I don't draw my ration very often and I think if the rest of the boys did not draw so much of theirs it would be better for them."

In June, 1864 some excitement was generated by the attempt of Deputy Sheriff C. M. Wormell, assisted by G. L. Blake of Bethel, who with a company of local men, attempted to arrest a deserter, John E. Bean of Albany. They successfully surrounded the house he was hiding in, but when he came out the back door into the shed, he fired his revolver at two of the posse surrounding the house. The bullet went through the brow of Calvin J. Kimball's hat then struck Lyman Russell, the carriage painter, in the chin passing into his shoulder where he, in the words of the *Democrat*, "picked it out." He was only slightly injured. Bean then sprang for the woods. Twenty shots were fired after him but he managed to escape into the night.

Bounty jumpers were not always so lucky. In December, 1864 near the end of the war, the *Democrat* reported that two men were arrested attempting to pass through Bethel on their way to Canada. Apparently this town was a familiar route for those attempting to collect the bounty paid for enlisting and then deserting for the *Democrat* periodically recorded attempts to stem this flow of lawbreakers.

Probably no event has more human interest than the case of Sergeant John Cooper. His story was perhaps repeated dozens of times throughout the country. He had been reported killed and buried following the battle of Cedar Creek. By the fall of 1864 he returned home to read (much to the joy of his family) his own obituary.

In summary the Civil War years were important in Bethel for they marked the greater industrialization of the town, the growth of the summer tourist trade with many hotels and boarding houses being established throughout the town and the increased importance of Bethel Hill as the commercial center of the town. It is obvious in Bethel, as in the North in general, that not everyone agreed with the conduct of the war or how those who went off to fight it should be compensated. There were many differences of opinion reflected in the town meetings, election results and the activities, for example, of town agent Samuel F. Gibson who ran as a "copperhead" candidate for Oxford County Clerk of Courts in 1863. Probably the most important result of the war upon Bethel was its effect upon her loyal sons. By examining the 1870 census it can be determined that five years after the war ended only fifty-three of the approximately 180 soldiers that the town sent to the war were still here to be counted. Besides those killed in the war, a few had died in the intervening years, but apparently for one hundred of the survivors, other locations appeared more promising for earning a living and raising a family.

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EDITOR'S CORNER

Since the last issue of the *Courier* the Society has lost a valued member with the death of Albert H. Brown of Rumford Center. "Brownie" was a Bethel native who was a keen observer of the Bethel scene for many years and never lost his interest. He added to our knowledge of Bethel by providing additional background on items he saw in the *Courier*. He donated many uniquely Bethel items to the Society so as a result of his thoughtfulness and vision they will be enjoyed by countless people in the future. Undoubtedly the most visible role "Brownie" played was that of a participant in the Society's annual quiz program "So You Think You Know Bethel." In the four years he played the game, he and his teammate Rosalind Rowe Chapman remained undefeated. I will miss "Brownie" very much and will always remember him as a great friend of the Society.

SRH

MEMORIES OF AN EARLIER ERA

Part III

by Marjorie Farwell Cummings

Editor's Note: This final installment of the reminiscences of Mrs. Cummings was written in 1982 when she was eighty five.

MORE INCIDENTS THAT COME TO MIND

Circle Suppers

In the summer months we had student pastors at the Middle Intervale Church. The minister used to board with Minnie Kimball, a maiden lady who lived with her bachelor brother in the house where Alvin and Alice Stevens now live. For social events there were the circle suppers. The families would gather at one of the homes, each family bringing something for a pot luck supper. These were always enjoyed, as there was not much opportunity for people of the neighborhood to get together. An outdoor game that was usually played was Drop the Handkerchief. Sometimes there would be a box supper as a fund raiser. Each of the ladies would bring a box, and they would be auctioned off to the men and boys. If there was a particular box some individual was determined to get, he might very well end up paying a much higher than average price for it. It was all in fun.

In later years, instead of the student pastor, Rev. and Mrs. William Green and son Harold from Natick, Rhode Island came each summer. They had a camp on a knoll in back of where Raymond Buck now lives. We used to have a neighborhood picnic at their place each summer. I recall that for one item my mother always made several blackberry pies for the occasion.

Although this had nothing to do with Circle Suppers, another get-together I vaguely recall is when my older sisters gave our parents a twenty-fifth anniversary party. This would have been in April, 1904. I cannot remember much in detail, but there were the usual neighborhood folks as well as some relatives we did not often see. Our parents were the recipients of much silverware, including some useful pieces they had not had heretofore. When not in use it was kept in its original boxes in a drawer of the secretary in the dining-living room. The top of the secretary was a cupboard with glass doors and was used for special dishes. Beneath the cupboard were three small drawers. The width on top between the cupboard and drawers had a hinged lift-up cover that opened forward and was used for a writing area. It was covered with a blue velvet-like material; there were two square insets to place ink bottles. This piece of furniture was built by a Bethel man who had his own business along with his home. It was a nice cabinet and I felt badly when I recently learned it had been remodeled, its nice brass drawer pulls removed and in general lost its original appearance.

The Larkin Club

Mama used to belong to a Larkin Club. I think it was similar to the clubs they have today. She took two memberships as some do when there are not enough for the club. This entitled her to a double value premium or two single premiums. I do not remember many of the products they carried, but some of the things mama got were the yellow cakes of laundry soap and such household needs as spices and flavorings. One of her premiums was a washing machine. It had a wooden tub and a sort of agitator system inside. There was a crank to turn to make the agitator go back and forth to wash the clothes. Another time the premium that delighted us children was a wooden cart. That really provided untold hours of pleasure, as well as often helpful chores like hauling down wood to the shed or carrying a basket of laundry to the orchard where it was hung. We also had a desk that was a Larkin premium.

The Door to Door Peddler

In springtime and sometimes fall, there were peddlers who regularly made the trips. It was amazing the variety of things that could be packed in those wagons; from pieces of calico and all sewing notions to tinware and on and on. The one I remember in particular was Mr. Littlefield; he was an elderly man as I knew him; he used to stay overnight at our house and for supper and breakfast. Mama could select something from his cart in return for lodging. Another peddler carried a bunch of bananas besides his regular line. Still another dealt in fish and clams and that gave us a treat. One day when I returned home from picking a bouquet of mayflowers, a peddler was at our house. When he saw and admired the flowers, he asked if he could buy them to take home to his sick wife. Mama said it would be nice for me to give them to him, which I did. He was pleased and insisted on giving me a trinket from his wagon. Living on a more or less isolated farm, these people were welcome visitors and a break from the regular routine.

Fourth of July

For Fourth of July we younger children had packets of the small firecrackers. We had a piece of lighted punk to light the fuses with. We liked to put a small can over the lighted firecracker and watch it pop in the air when it exploded. We also had a small pistol with caps to shoot and sparklers to use in the evening. There were Roman Candles, Skyrockets, and Cannon Crackers among the things the older ones had. A few times we went to the Buck family on Swan Hill. Then each family would take their larger pieces over there which made a nice display of fireworks and the neighborhood get-together was always enjoyed. Once there was an accident when Ernest Buck thought a large firecracker he was holding in his hand had failed to burn. It exploded in his hand. He was immediately taken to the doctor. Fortunately it did not permanently damage his hand to any great extent. We had a chance to learn what could happen and make us more cautious.

My First Train Ride

My father inherited a \$100.00 share of Grand Trunk Railroad stock from his father. The Railroad Company for a number of years gave stockholders a free ride to Portland each year on the first Tuesday in August, to go to their offices and collect the interest of 6%. The widow of one of my father's brothers lived in Portland with her daughter, and papa always packed a suitcase of whatever was available in farm produce to take to them. One year, probably 1903, it was my turn to take the trip with him. At that time there were three passenger trains going each way. The early one left Bethel about 5 a.m. then one about 9 a.m. and the third around 5 p.m. The up trains arrived in Bethel around 10 a.m., 4 p.m., and 10 p.m. We went down on the early train so to return on the afternoon one. While papa was doing his shopping and business, my cousin took me around some, so it was I got my first glimpse of the ocean and the big outside world. On other trips papa always brought us home a gift. One year for Grace and me it was china dolls and another year mine was Meade's book entitled Daddy's Girl. He autographed it to me Emma Margie Farwell from Papa, 1909, August 3rd. I still have the book.

Christmas

As I think about Christmas in my earliest recollections, it was a time when most things were planned and done by the older members of the family. The tree was set up in the parlor, the room reserved for company and special occasions only. We did

string popcorn and cranberries and make paper decorations for it. Sometimes we hung our stockings by the fireplace also. There would be secret sewing going on. When we were a little older, we were given a small amount of money to buy gifts for the rest of the family or helped in making something. When it was time we were ushered into the parlor to see the tree already lighted with real wax Christmas candles. It was a pretty sight. There were candle-holders that snapped onto the tree branches that held the candles in place. Not long after the gifts were given out, the candles would be extinguished as of course they were a big fire hazard. One year Grace and I received big rag dolls with switches of real hair. (With too much combing and trimming, they finally ended up bare-headed, but we loved them just the same.) There would be new warm nighties or some other article of clothing and new mittens and perhaps a game. Another year there were three red sleds by the tree that delighted us and gave much pleasure. My older brother was a real ingenious fellow. I remember he made gifts for all the family; I do not recall them all, but for Grace and me he made little sleighs for our dolls; for mama he made a sewing stand from dowels and a round cheese box; at the top was a smaller square box with spindles for spools of thread, et cetera. I remember still seeing it at the farm after the families had left. There were big family gatherings and bounteous meals.

From the years 1910 to 1917 I was away from home at Christmas so do not know how it was during that time. We exchanged gifts by mail. Papa sent a barrel of apples and another of assorted vegetables in the fall and often other items tucked in on top of them.

We had a rugged sled that was called Old Dick. I was told a man had it built planning to take it with him to the Gold Rush in Klondike. Something happened that he didn't go and my father bought the sled. I wish I could know whatever became of Old Dick. It was such a wonderful sled, not only for sliding, but for rugged work as well. It was almost like a part of the family.

THE CLOSING CHAPTER OF MY CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

Mother's and father's large brood are all grown, married and in homes of their own. As far as I know, we all got to adulthood without any broken bones; that is not to say there were not near misses. There was the time when the clumsy horse stumbled when trotting and the jerk of it threw Grace out of the wagon. It was thought a wheel must have gone over her, but after examination, the doctor found no serious injury. In haying season, we were allowed to tread around on the hay when the men were loading it, perhaps to pack it down a bit. Once when the hay was already above the rack, I accidentally got too near the stick that was in front of the rack to hold the reins, it broke off and I fell down between the horses; fortunately they did not run or step on me. Papa picked me up and carried me to the house, but I was not badly hurt. We liked to play in the barn, but we were not supposed to play on the scaffolds when they were filled with hay. Once when we were playing in the hay, Robert got too close to the edge and slid down over the hay onto the barn floor. Mama was frightened when she picked him up, but again we were fortunate; and so it was that we learned our lessons. I think all children must have guardian angels.

We cannot know that it meant to our parents to have the children all leaving home. Perhaps they had hoped there would be one who would want to stay and carry on the farm as so often was done. Mama did tell me years later that she cried her pillow wet many nights after the three of us had left. I did not mean it to be unkind when I responded with "Oh, mama, I would think

you would have been glad of some peace and quiet for a change." That was not the way she was.

They did not have money riches to give us, but they taught us that honesty is the best policy, and to tell the truth and we would never have to worry about being caught in a lie. If any of us had a problem and asked papa for advice he would always say "Don't cross a bridge until you come to it, as it is more than likely you won't need to." In other words, don't worry about things that may never happen. Mama always had comforting things to say when our childhood feelings were hurt. When I went to her feeling hurt after learning of something that had been said about me that wasn't true, she said; "Oh, don't let that bother you; just think when it is you they are talking about, somebody else is getting a much-needed rest." When I wished that I was beautiful, she told me how thankful I should be to have two good eyes to see, ears to hear, a mind to learn and arms and legs to get about, and that all her children were beautiful to her.

Eva was married to George W. Pillsbury, February 23, 1916, They had a dairy farm in Rangeley.

Grace married Ernest S. Buck, December 31, 1916. Their first home was on Swan Hill, Bethel, in an apartment in Ernest's family home and he carried on the farm for several years.

Wallace married Mildred Sargent of Lowell, Massachusetts, July 9, 1917. They lived in North Tewksbury, Massachusetts. He was a carpenter.

Marjorie married Chester F. Cummings, August 27, 1922. They lived in Hanover, Maine, where he was a millwright.

Robert married Ruth Ethridge, December 22, 1923. They lived in Mexico, Maine where he had a garage.

The winter of 1921-1922 papa and mama spent in Massachusetts, dividing their time between their daughter Cora and son Wallace and families, returning in the spring to carry on the farm as they were able.

I could not know when I was married in August, 1922 that it would be the last of the big family gatherings at the farm, when the house was full to the brim and bustling with activity.

Later that fall Robert heard that the small store near the head of Church Street was for sale. He suggested to our parents that they buy it, which they did and moved up from the farm. This was the same building that R.E.L. Farwell, a cousin of my father, had run as a grocery store years before. I had been there many times with papa to buy groceries, while I stood before the candy counter trying to decide how to spend my pennies with all the variety to choose from. In more recent years the store was owned by Sherman Greenleaf, who operated it as a gift shop and also sold ice cream and candy. My parents served light lunches, sold ice cream and candy, and mama did some home cooking.

We had bought a Ford touring car in 1918 and Robert taught papa and me to drive it. Papa was so happy that he could drive the car. The following spring, 1923, he drove back and forth to the farm and store, and did what he could about the place.

In March 1924 Walter Wight, Lena's husband, died suddenly of a heart attack while working on the repair crew at the Oxford Paper Company, Rumford. Papa attended his funeral, but shortly after that he was taken ill, and died of pneumonia just ten days after Walter's funeral. This left both mama and Lena without their mates. Mama asked Lena to go into business with her, which she did and moved to Bethel with her son William and small daughter Kathleen. They finished off more rooms upstairs for an apartment and added a dining room to the building. They expanded the business to include a restaurant and home bakery

and continued in business together for the next twenty-one years. This building has now been remodelled by the present owner into a home.

Mama kept the farm for several years and we would occasionally meet there for a picnic, but finally she sold it.

There is something sad about seeing one's parents working so hard to gain their objectives and then having to leave it all. It seems that is the way of life. We are much a part of nature. A seed is planted and takes root, grows into a plant, blossoms, and bears fruit, then withers and returns to the earth. So it is that one generation perpetuates the next for endless time.

As for myself, I feel privileged to have lived in this twentieth century with the advantage of observing the vast progress that has taken place. I have read there has been more change and progress in this century than in any other equal period of time in the history of mankind; and still more already in plan and expected to be in use before the end of the century almost boggle the mind.

I would not wish to go back to the older times, but would it not be well for us to pause occasionally and think of the struggle and fortitude of our forefathers in establishing this great country? Would it not perhaps make us a little more appreciative of what we get when we so mechanically "flip the switch"?

SOCIETY OFFERS UNIQUE HISTORY COURSE

Through the cooperation of the Society and SAD #44, students at Telstar Regional High School had this fall a unique educational opportunity available to few high school students in Maine. Called "Grass Roots History" the course was designed to provide students with an appreciation of history by examining its methods and materials on a first-hand basis, using the extensive resources of the Bethel Historical Society/Dr. Moses Mason Museum and other community resources.

The course, conducted within a seminar format, stressed reading, writing and research skills. Students were required to submit three papers during the course: an autobiography, a biography and a research paper, all based on a variety of historical sources discussed daily during class meetings at the Dr. Moses Mason House. In addition, short weekly papers on various historical sources and a daily journal were also required.

Teaching the course was Society Director Stanley R. Howe, a certified Maine teacher with advanced degrees in history (M.A., Ph.D.) who has published articles and book reviews on local history in popular and scholarly publications. He received no compensation from SAD #44 for this service since it was approved as part of his responsibilities as Director by the Society Trustees, emphasizing the organization's commitment to provide programs and presentations in local history to area schools. The course resulted through the efforts and encouragement of Dan Hart of the Guidance Department and Warren Bouchard, former Telstar principal with the support of current principal and Society member Theodore Davis and Superintendents Dr. Wayne Gersen (also a Society member) and his successor Dewaine Craig.

During the eighteen weeks of the course students faced the challenge of defining history, using logic to come up with historical conclusions based on the best available evidence. They also explored thoroughly the nature of primary and secondary sources and evaluated the need for accuracy, order, honesty, self-awareness and imagination in historical research and writing. Historical sources, many from the Society's collections, were considered during each class including newspapers, diaries, letters, official documents, directories, oral sources, artifacts, maps, photographs and paintings. Relationships between the local level and what was happening on the state, regional and national level were recurring themes of the course.

Students in high school courses rarely have at their fingertips "the materials" of history. This course combined the "hands-on" experience with valuable skills that should prove useful in post-secondary educational experiences and throughout life.

Students enrolled in the course were Jon Akers, Rhonda Aron, Christine Bundy, Jeff Dunham, Sue Gould, Bernie Haines, Julie Hastings, Jon Head, Penny Kimball, Michelle Marston, Tammy Poland, Darren Tripp and Brian Whitman.

BOOK REVIEW

Virginia C. Downs, *Life by the Tracks - when passenger trains steamed through the Notch*. (Canaan, New Hampshire: Phoenix Publishing, 1983), pp. xii, 113, \$10.95.

Life by the Tracks is, as one would expect, a book dealing with railroading. In this case, the particular line is the Maine Central's "Mountain Division" which ascends and traverses the steep sides of New Hampshire's Crawford Notch. Unlike many railroad anthologies, however, this book reveals the very real

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world of the people who worked on, or were strongly influenced by "the steepest railroad track in the eastern United States."

The book centers around the lives of the Evans family, who from 1903 to 1952 lived in a scenic but often harsh environment high up on the angular sides of Mount Willard at the northern end of the Notch. The matriarch of the family, Hattie Evans, was left a widow with four small children when a steam engine killed her husband. Hattie Evans continued to provide food and lodging for the section men that boarded in the gray, castle-like section house located precipitously-close to the high trestle over Willey Brook; at the same time, she created strong family bonds and taught old-fashioned values to her children.

Throughout the volume, Hattie's four children reflect on their mountain home and their mother's influence in a series of taped oral interviews (skillfully edited, one might add), a method of recording history that has gained wide popularity in the last decade. The stories that surface reflect a "keen nostalgia for a period when presidents, business tycoons, and tennis stars crossed paths with casual sightseers walking the tracks, climbing mountain trails, and gazing at the tumbling flumes," to quote the author. With fondness, the children (now in their seventies) recall how the youngest, Enola (having given birth before the doctor's arrival by rail from Bartlett, Hattie gave her second daughter and last child this name, "alone" spelled backwards), was tied to the family's flagpole as the thundering engines passed, of how each was stationed forty feet from the other as the up-bound train slowed and scooped them up for the trip to school, and of how each eventually left their mountain home but returned each weekend to enjoy the company of the "Indomitable Hattie."

Of value, too, are the memories of the nearby Crawford House and its guests, vividly recalled by the Evans children, all of whom worked at the hotel in their adolescence. Several chapters of the book are also devoted to recollections of life at the Notch by others who knew it, notably by a World War I veteran who served guard duty on the wind-swept Willey Brook Bridge, and Crawford House guests who recalled the hermit "English Jack" who lived in a cabin near the hotel and entertained guests by, among other things, swallowing live snakes and rats.

Life by the Tracks brings back the grand era of steam railroad-ing and resort hotels that has all but passed from the scene. In the short time since the book's publication, the Maine Central

Published quarterly by the Bethel Historical Society, Stanley R. Howe, Editor. Please address all inquiries and suggestions to Editor, Bethel Historical Society Newsletter, Box 12, Bethel, Maine 04217.

Railroad has regrettably ended its freight service through the Notch, leaving a question as to how this historically important rail link might be preserved for the future. This attractively designed and well-illustrated book records in a unique fashion an emotion-filled time when the uplifting atmosphere of the nearby mountains gave a special quality to everyday life.

Randall H. Bennett

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Alvin L. Barth Jr., Bethel. A teacher at Gould Academy and Director of Alumni Affairs, Mr. Barth has been chairman of the Society's Education and Research Committee for several years and for some time has been supervising student archaeological work at the Mill Brook site, one of Bethel's early settlement areas.

Mary Lou Cole, Norwood, Massachusetts. A Bethel native, Mrs. Cole has been active as a guide at the Dr. Moses Mason Museum.

Lucretia Evans, Bronx, New York. A descendant of the Robinson family of Bethel, she has also been a generous donor to the Society.

Allan Fraser, Bethel, is retired.

Doris Fraser, Bethel, is retired.

Ernest and Betty Perkins, Bethel. Long active in the Society, they are perhaps best known for their portrayal of Doctor and Mrs. Mason at various Society occasions.

Joanne Peabody Stewart, Kalamazoo, Michigan. Mrs. Stewart is a descendant of the Peabody family of Gilead whose family once owned the tavern now on the National Register of Historic Places.

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